

Judy Collins *Fifth Album* (Elektra Records)
By Peter Stone Brown
Nine stars

This album at the time was easily the best album Collins had yet delivered, following the format (and maybe formula) of her two previous albums where she had started to focus more on the newer songwriters and less on traditional folksongs. This album is almost entirely contemporary songwriters with two exceptions, "So Early In The Spring" and "Lord Gregory." Looking at the album now, it's almost a mirror of what was going on in the New York City folk scene in the first half of 1965 and the comparison with Joan Baez's sixth album *Farewell Angelina* released roughly at the same time is inevitable. Both cover Dylan's "Daddy You Been On My Mind," and both included traditional ballads, and while Baez' album includes subtle electric guitar, Collins usually recorded with additional (though not electric) musicians. While Collins has three Dylan songs here, none are political, but she includes several songs from or about the civil rights movement, and includes newer songwriters whose names are now familiar, Phil Ochs, Eric Andersen, Richard Fariña and Gordon Lightfoot, as well as Billy Ed Wheeler, whose "Coming of the Roads" is perhaps the most beautiful song on the album.

The album kicks off with an upbeat version of "Pack Up Your Sorrows" written by Richard Fariña and his sister-in-law Pauline Marden with Fariña on dulcimer. Fariña also plays dulcimer on Gil Turner's "Carry It On," a version that holds up musically 50 years later.

Collins always had excellent musicians working with her and on this album multi-instrumentalist Eric Weissberg handles most of the second guitar work, providing counterpoint and keeping things tasty without ever getting in Collins' way. John Sebastian's harp on Eric Andersen's "Thirsty Boots" is exceptional. However the standout part on the album is Danny Kalb's guitar on "Daddy You Been On My Mind."

Looking at the album now, one realizes that with a slight rearrangement of the track listing, Collins could have ended the album with a fairly strong statement on the civil rights movement at the time with Ochs' "In the Heat of the Summer" about the 1964 Harlem riots, "Carry It On" and the Malvina Reynolds/Barbara Dane Collaboration "It Isn't Nice" that closes the album in a version recorded in concert. While the song was cool at the time, it's the one song that hasn't stood the test of time.

This would end up being Collins' last folk album. Her next album would be dramatically different in musical backing, though her interest in contemporary songwriters would remain. Either way *Fifth Album* was a strong effort then and remains so.

